

# 3. AGREEMENTS

**In this section, you will find information on how to:**

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## **a. Create Agreements on Releasing Information (Who Releases What/When/How)<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Background: Importance of Creating and Documenting Agreements on Information Release Authorities (Who Releases What/When/How)**

In the event of a public health emergency, your agency should know in advance if you can release requested information to the media and to the public or if the information should come from another source. Seldom does an organization “own” a piece of information exclusively. Typically, many levels of a response command could release information.

If other authorities need to be involved in the release of information, learn to work collaboratively with them. Issues of “turf” are best resolved in advance of an emergency situation. Respect your partners in the process of releasing information, remembering that the important thing is to get information out quickly and accurately. Once the information is released, you can incorporate the information into products for the public and partners and meet your audiences’ needs.

### **Steps for Creating and Documenting Agreements on Information Release**

1. Consider the types of public health emergencies when you may need to release information to the media and to the public.
2. Consider which information other authorities would need to review prior to it being released. These authorities could include:
  - a. MDPH
  - b. State or local police, fire, EMS, other emergency responders
  - c. CDC, FBI, or other federal authority
3. Create agreements with each group on how the release of information will be handled. Get agreements down on paper.
4. Expect the agreements to change, and update your documentation and plans accordingly.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: United States Centers For Disease Control and Prevention. 2002. *Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication*.